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SAIGON BRIEFING SHEET 1967

1 May 1967

The following information is designed to assist the new arrival to Saigon during the first two or three weeks of his stay. Only the very essential information is discussed here.

BRIEFINGS

You will have the following briefings as soon as possible after your arrival:

Personnel Finance Security Medical

DUTY HOURS

The normal duty hours in the Embassy and the Annex are 0800 to 1230 and 1430 to 1800 Monday thru Friday. On Saturdays duty hours are from 0830 to 1230. All officers are covered on weekends.

MEDICAL

All water should be boiled 30 minutes and filtered before drinking. Filters are provided in all billets. Other precautions will be discussed in a medical briefing shortly after arrival. Should medical care be needed call the medical technician or the doctor at Tiger 467 (office) or 22417 (home) for an appointment. Office is located at 88 Yen Do, Bldg #5

PAY PROCEDURE

Ten days after the close of the pay period your check will be deposited to your stateside allottee. The second Wednesday after the close of the pay period, if your deposit slips are being mailed, you should receive notice of deposit. A transfer allowance of \$75 for people arriving from Washington is payable when your PCS travel voucher is paid approximately two weeks after your arrival. Payment is made in MPC. Questions about other check cashing facilities will be included in your briefings.

Official Americans are authorized to draw US\$200 in Military Payment Certificates (MPC), commonly called Scrip, per day. The authorized facility for cashing checks is the American Embassy's Norodom Compound, 4 Thong Nhat. Both the PX and the Commissary accept personal checks for the exact amount of the purchase. In addition, there is a check cashing facility at the entrance to the main PX where checks may be cashed for MPC up to \$50.00. Piasters are not accepted in either the PX, Commissary, or any American installation. It is advisable to have some Scrip with you at all times. In no cases may American dollars be used anywhere in Vietnam. MPC may be used in American installations only, never in Vietnamese installations.

Other places to convert MPC into Piasters: 1. Brink BQ, 2. Capitol BEQ, 3. Plaza BEQ, 4. Hung Dau BEQ, 5. MAC-V, Tran Hung Dao.

PX AND COMMISSARY

Commissary card applications will be completed as part of in-processing. Normally it is seven days before cards are received from Commissary.

PX AND COMMISSARY (CONTINUED)

The Navy Exchange (PX) and Commissary stock popular brand items found in the U.S. Ration cards are issued which ration your purchase of cigarettes and liquor to six cartons, 3 bottles of liquor, 3 bottles of wine or champagne, 3 bottles mixed liquor, and 3 cases of beer per month.

The following items are also rationed and will be recorded on MACLV Ration Cards in Section titled "controllable items."

ITEM	AUTHORIZED RATION	ITEM	AUTHORIZED RATION
Amplifier	1	Tape Recorder, under \$75.00	2
Camera, Movie	1	Tape Recorder, over \$75.00	1
Camera, Still	2	Television	1
Fan, Electric	1	Tuner	1
Projector, Movie	1	Typewriter	1
Projector, Still	1	Watch	2
Radio, under \$20.00	2	Beer	3 cs
Radio, over \$20.00	1	Cigarettes	6 cts
Record Player	1	Liquor (liquors & wines)	3 btls

Upon issuance of new ration cards, record of previous purchases will be transferred to new cards at time issued. In the event duplicate ration cards are issued upon report of loss or theft, the entire section of controllable items will be blocked out at time of issue.

The PX locations are as follows:

Main Store & Commissary: Cholon 136 Nguyen Tri Phuong Ph 60455	Mon, Wed, Fri & Sat	1000-1800
	Tue & Thur	1000-2000
	Sunday	1300-1700
Tan Son Nhut Store: 2 ADVON Area	Mon thru Sat	1000-1800
	Sunday	1300-1700
Brink Ph 40530	Daily	1100-2100

The Commissary is located at 136 Nguyen Tri Phuong, Cholon, the same premises as the Main PX Ph 60455 (Shopping tip: ideal shopping time for the PX & Commissary 1830-2000). An Embassy bus services the PX & Commissary daily leaving the Chancery at 1030 and 1500. Notify Embassy Motor Pool Dispatcher (x254) 15 minutes before departure.

MAIL

APO Postal Service is provided at four locations in the Saigon area. Air Mail is normally dispatched daily. Letters posted prior to 0730 will normally be processed in that day's outgoing mail. Civilians are required to pay postage on letters and packages. Air mail to CONUS takes about 5 or 6 days while surface mail takes several weeks. Your personal mail is delivered to your section. There are letter drop boxes in all BOQ's and BEQ's. A letter drop box is also located in the Main Embassy on the ground floor. Air mail stamps may also be purchased in the Embassy's mail room.

MAIL (COURT MAIL)

APO 96233 (Houses of Generation)

APO 96233 (MAC Compound)

Parcel Post/Stamp: 0800-1800
0800-2000 (Tues & Thur)Money Orders/Registry: 0800-1730
0800-1930 (Tues & Thur)

UNIT (MACV-1), UNIT 2 (MACV-11), UNIT 3 (Keelpor Compound)

Parcel Post/Stamp: 0730-1900
Registry/Money Orders: 0730-1830 (7 days a week)

UNIT 4 (Tent City "C"):

Parcel Post/Stamp: 0800-1200
0800-1600 (Closed Thur)ARMED FORCES RADIO STATION

An Armed Forces Radio Station operates 24 hours daily, presenting a variety of programs from top U.S. Radio Networks as well as complete local music and news programming. The Station is received on 540 kilocycles on the standard broadcast band and 99.9 megacycles on the FM band.

ARMED FORCES TELEVISION

Armed Forces TV Saigon operates on Channel 11 1830 to 2300 Mon thru Fri and 1230 thru 2300 on Sat and Sun. If TV sets are brought to Vietnam, they should be 50 cycles as house current is 50 cycles. If your set is 60 cycles you will encounter a slight flicker. A portable TV set with battery charger is recommended. Repeater stations are now in operation in Danang and Qui Nhon and within one year there will be eight repeater stations through out Vietnam.

POWER SHORTAGE

Due to present shortage of power, the CEE has been suspending power varyingly from every three nights to every eight nights from 1800-2315. There are some interruptions in the daytime from 0700 to 1800 hours but on a less regular basis as the peak electrical period in the Saigon area is not until nighttime.

BUILDING REPAIRS OR MAINTENANCE

Those persons quartered in billets controlled by CSD/MACV Saigon area (except hotels) may telephone or visit the Building Maintenance Unit located in Warehouse #2, Yen Do Street, telephone 50423 or Tiger 3324 for repairs. Hours of work are 0730 to 1200 and 1400 to 1800, Monday thru Saturday. Emergency requests or notes may be delivered to the guard shed (entrance) 83 Yen Do Street up until 2230 hours, including Saturdays and Sundays. Written requisitions are not required for repair work. Requisitions or memorandums (with sketches) are required for all new work and/or issuable items originating from the CSD Housing Supply Section or from the Supply Operation Section.

BUILDING REPAIR OR MAINTENANCE (CONT'D)

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Some repair problems, especially those originating with the CEE or P.T.T. (local electric, water and telephone companies) cannot be corrected by our workers; however, they will insure that the problem is reported promptly to the proper authority, and in some instances, they can arrange for the delivery of trucked water to your quarters. Preventive repair and maintenance team workers are scheduled to visit the larger quarters periodically while those persons occupying small units or apartments should call the office and arrange for the team workers to be admitted thru instructions to the housekeepers, servants, and guards as appropriate.

Occupants are expected to instill good housekeeping practices and safety precautions in their servants and guards. Maintenance Unit instructs and teaches them the care of most major appliances, i.e., refrigerator-defrosting weekly, drinking water filter, butane gas stove, washing machine, irons, voltage regulators, etc. The team workers will service the air conditioning units and replace light bulbs, tubes, fuses, etc. when notified. Each worker will have his personal I.D. card, CSD identification card and a copy of the job order (pink) will be left for the occupant's information.

Electricity in Saigon is in short supply and is not controlled by transformers in each billet. Voltage can fluctuate from 85 volts to 125 volts and from 185 to 235 volts at 50 cycles and occasionally there is insufficient amperes to start pumps or major appliances during the peak use periods of the 24-hour day.

HOUSING

In most cases the initial housing assignment will be permanent unless it develops that a review should be considered for operational needs. In any case, prior approval will be obtained for any change. Shared quarters require shared responsibilities for household expenses. It is recommended that understandings be established upon assignment. Unless an emergency, requests for alterations or additions to household furnishings will be submitted in writing.

LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANING

American dry cleaning facilities are provided in Vietnam. A pick-up station is located in the Briuk PX. Civilian laundries throughout the city vary in quality, but in most cases the standards are below those found in the U.S.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation to and from your office can usually be arranged by official car and driver. It is suggested that you check with your supervisor on the availability. During duty hours and until 2200 you may request an official car and driver for official or personal use. This request is made to the local motor pool dispatcher by phone (60488) and a car will be there shortly. In the evenings at 1830, 1900 and 1930 a shuttle car leaves from the main Embassy entrance. This is for those working late. Taxis are in great demand and difficult to get. Cycles which are peddled and cycles which are motorized are additional means of transportation. Cycles are more expensive than taxis and before riding in one it is wise to agree on a price to your destination. It should be remembered that after 2200 hours taxi fare is increased by 50%. It is up to you to make this calculation since the meter reads only the normal fare. For example, if after 2200 you have a 10-piaster

TRANSPORTATION (CON: 10)

fare you are expected to pay 10 plus 50% or 15 piasters. The curfew now in effect in Saigon is from 2300 until 0400. Everyone is expected to be off the streets during these hours.

TIPPING

Tipping is largely a matter of judgment. In most restaurants a 10% service charge is added. A small additional tip might be given for exceptional service. Tipping the taxi driver is usually greatly appreciated. A rule of thumb is to give the driver the next amount divisible by five. For example, fare is 12 p's, tip is 3 p's, total: 15 piasters.

READING MATERIALS

There are three Saigon dailies: The Saigon Post, the Saigon Daily News and the Vietnam Guardian costing about 15 piasters each. Many French and Vietnamese journals are available. The Asia edition of Time and Newsweek is on sale every week at news stands for about 20 p's each. The Stars and Stripes is a military daily newspaper which is distributed free to American personnel in Saigon but on a limited basis - one copy for every five per sons. A subscription will be delivered to your quarters for \$2.50 per month, Tel 31952. Most of the popular U.S. books and magazines are on sale at the various PX facilities.

PIASTERS

The currency used in Vietnam is called Piasters. Almost all Vietnam currency is paper note. There are denominations of 1's, 5's, 10's, 20's, 50's, 100's, 200's, and 500's. There are a few coins, usually one and ten piasters. Piasters are referred to as p's. The present rate of exchange is \$118 to 1000.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Catholic: Mass on Sunday in English at 0630, 0730, 0900, 1100, and 1800 at 43 Tu Xuong

Cathedral de Notre Dame, Kennedy Square: Mass in English Sundays at noon.

Jewish: Friday evening in Room 322 of Box 500, 147 Nguyen Hue

International Protestant Church: 7 Truoi Cao Xa

Adventist: Sunday at the Chapel of the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital, 124 Tu Xuong, Gia Dinh

Anglican and Episcopal: Sunday at French Reformed Church, 211 Nguyen Hue

Evangelical: Sunday at 89 Nguyen Hue (in French only)

Church of Christ: Sunday at 422 Hung Thap Tu

OUTSIDE CLUBS AND DINERS

Bar Branch, 147 Nguyen Hue

Trunks Branch, 141 Hung Thap Tu

Membership is required for both bars. All bar customers must apply at 347/118 Hung Thap Tu. A copy of travel orders must be shown to verify grades. NBC's are used in all bars. Merit

CLUBS AND MEETS (CONT'D)

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Most are approximately \$1.50 for breakfast, \$1.00 for lunch and \$1.00 for dinner. (Sunday dinner \$2.00). Cocktail lounges are operated in conjunction with each meet. Entertainment (live music, movies, happy hours, cookouts, etc.) is provided on weekends and on various evenings throughout the week. Membership is limited to DOD civilians: male GS-7 and above; females GS-01 and above.

Meal Hours: Monday-Fridays: Breakfast 0600-0800
Dinner 1730-2000
Lunch 1130-1330
A la carte 2000-2300

Both clubs have a very pleasant open air terrace on the roof for lunch, dinner and cocktails. Free movies are shown in both BQ's.

RESTAURANTS

Bear in mind that no public meeting place is considered safe or secure. The following are the better places if you have to eat out:

Bex BQ, 147 Nguyen Hue
Brinks BQ, 101 Hai Ba Trung
International House (members & guests), 60-71 Nguyen Hue
Caravelle Hotel Roof, 122-130 Tu Do
Majestic Hotel Roof, 1 Tu Do
Aterbac, Nguyen Hue
Club 26: located between the Embassy and the Embassy Annex, commonly referred to as "The Cosmos". Cards will be issued on arrival. MFC is medium of exchange. Only light snacks, breakfast and lunch are available. Beer and mixed drinks are available from 1100-1430 and 1700-2000 daily.
La Cigale, 18 Dinh Tien Hoang
Guillaume Tell, 32 Trinh Minh The
Kontiki, 20 Phan Thanh Gian
L'Amiral, Thai Lap Thanh
Mayfair, 42 Gia Long
Cheap Charlies, Hai Ba Trung (across from the Brink)
Van Canh, 145 Calmette
Olympia, 123 Le Loi
Arc En Ciel, Cholon, Tran Hung Dao
Crazy Cow, 44 Dien Tien Hoang
Steak House, Le Thanh Ton and Tu Do

SOME RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS (AnEmb Notice, 27 Jan 65)

If you are involved in or are in the vicinity of an explosion and are hurt, remain at the scene until the U.S. and ARVN emergency crews arrive. These teams are trained in expediting medical care to the injured. If you are not injured do not investigate or remain in the area. Many terrorist bombings have been followed by a second and third blast minutes after the first.

PURSES AND WALLETS. Potential victims of purse snatchers or pick-pockets can assist in preventing these crimes by keeping the hazard constantly in mind. Be alert to news-boys, children and beggars.

PHYSICAL SECURITY OF QUARTERS: Each occupant should conduct a personal survey of his quarters. Check each and every opening of any type to assure that it can be reasonably secured against forced entry. It is recognized that a determined burglar, given sufficient time can force his way into any residence using only ordinary tools. The objective is to secure each opening so as to require the criminal to make sufficient noise or take sufficient time that he will be discovered before he can accomplish his purpose.

If you leave your quarters for an extended period of time make certain that your servants understand their responsibilities or hire a reliable watchman.

SERVANTS: It is recommended that all domestic servants, including drivers, be checked in the files of the Vietnamese police. The Embassy offers this service.

TELEPHONE: Check with your supervisor for guidance.

REPORTS TO POLICE: Every attempted or successful crime should be reported immediately to the police station of the district in which it occurred.

CHECKING ACCOUNTS: Any member of the U.S. Armed Forces serving in Vietnam including retired Military personnel, U.S. Citizens employed by the U.S. Govt or U.S. Gov't agencies including U.S. Government Contractors may open a checking account with either the Chase Manhattan Bank or Bank of America. This checking account pays interest calculated at 5% p.a. will be credited to your account at the end of each calendar quarter provided the balance of your account has not fallen below U.S. \$100.00 during that calendar year.

CURFEW: At present and since 25 Aug. 1966 a curfew exists in the Saigon/Cholon area and all employees of the U. S. Government will observe a curfew from 2300 to 0400 daily. All personnel are expected to be in their quarters except for official business. Transit through the city between these hours will be limited to purpose of proceeding between places of official duty or between residences and places of official duty.

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